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The Left Tradition in Church and State

THE MESSIANIC CORE

Rosemary Ruether

Whatever Happened to a Campaign Idea?

MR. NIXON'S VOLUNTARISM

Amitai Etzioni

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NEWS & VIEWS

Move Over, Patrick Henry

Ohio State football coach Woody Hayes cemented his reputation for hard-nosed patriotism at the Mon Valley (Pa.) Sports' Writers dinner.

Pittsburgh Press columnist Roy McHugh listened and felt the first pains of indigestion when Hayes put the Mylai massacre in perspective.

"It's all right for American troops to shoot women and children suspected of being sympathetic toward the Viet Cong, Woody as much as said, if the children are over five."

Thus McHugh summarized.

By the time Hayes got around to the press, McHugh was practically a stretcher case.

"As Hayes pointed out, newspapers are written and edited by subversives. These people show, when they report such trifling incidents as Mylai and the service-club scandal in Vietnam, that they want us to lose the war."

McHugh moved on to zap the patriots in Tampa, Florida, who pressured a local boxing promoter from booking in Cassius Clay. But there was no getting Woody Hayes out of mind.

Whew! Draft-age youths don't know what they missed when Hayes passed up Richard Nixon's bid to succeed General Hershey. Wouldn't he have been somethin'.

The Faith in Ireland

The promotion of an intense social actionist to the historic but backward bishopric of Killarney is being viewed as confirmation of the new day in Ireland.

For the past ten years, Father Eamonn Casey has been chaplain to Irish immigrants in England and a fiery proponent of expanded housing priorities there. Now he succeeds to a diocese long the epitome of the rockhard conservatism of Irish Catholicism.

His was an "unorthodox" choice, according to Mary McCutchan and Eamonn Fingleton in London's *New Society,* but consistent nevertheless with liberalizing trends.

Other signs of the new times: the Irish church's apparent willingness to waive privileges rooted in the national constitution, and the ability of younger clergy to speak out against civil and ecclesiastical bans on contraception and divorce without being hammered into a peat bog.

But the future isn't all promise, according to McCutchan and Fingleton. "Many young Catholics are questioning the basic tenets of their faith in a way their parents never did."

The authors' evidence isn't very dramatic: a survey at University College, Dublin, which shows that nearly 10 percent of the students are not going to Sunday Mass.

The survey, nevertheless, shook up the Irish press, which headlined the results as conclusive proof that "students are becoming increasingly irreligious."

Imagine the Te Deums there would be anywhere else, however, if figures were comparable instead of the near-reverse.

Colombia's Blood Sport

They have their own version of our Black Panther war down in Colombia. There the enemy is the Cuiba Indian.

During the exploration period, the Cuibas were considered to have one of the New World's most important cultures. Today they're nomads roaming the savannahs, foraging what they need for survival; they're now considered nuisances.

So two or three times each year, cattle ranchers and farmers of the 15 million hectare area of eastern Colombia gather for two days to shoot as many Indians as they can hunt down. If they're lucky, they'll bag up to 20 Cuibas.

The government has sent police into the lowlands seeking to dissuade settlers from their blood sport, but, according to *The Mennonite,* they've been less than successful. The Cuibas are "fair game," and doing away with them is no crime.

The Mennonite, journal of the Mennonite Church's education commission, says the Cuiba population has been whittled to a "mere 5,000."

Hoof-in-Mouth Martha

Hard Times reports Martha Mitchell, outspoken wife of the Attorney General, emerging from a strenuous gala at the Israeli Embassy and sighing to Mrs. Gilbert Hahn as she settled into a limousine, "Boy, I'm sure glad to get away from all those Jews."

Mrs. Hahn, wife of the City Council chairman and herself a Jew, told the story around, then denied it when newsmen began checking.

Reporters at *Newsweek* and *Time,* and *Washington Post* columnist Maxine Cheshire, wanted to write the story but were barked off by senior editors.

Farewell, 1969

Everything was in order at year's end. The Pentagon played Santa Claus to McDonnell-Douglas and slipped it a contract worth up to $6 billion for yet another jet fighter plane. The Navy bestowed on RCA a $252.9 million contract for a missile defense system. The Atomic Energy Commission set off its 200th nuclear blast since the 1963 test ban treaty, and in Vietnam U.S. dead stood at 40,000. Discrimination against poor and blacks was uncovered in the allocation in Mississippi of government emergency funds for the victims of Hurricane Camille. And in Seattle, the Catholic chief of chaplains at Fort Lewis barred peace Bishop Antulio Parilla, S.J., from visiting political prisoners in the stockade—out of solicitousness for the privacy of the prisoners, of course. It was the ultimate absurdity of an absurd year. Happier New Year. JOHN DEEDY

Abu—*Indian Express,* New Delhi

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CORRESPONDENCE

Vis-a-Vis St. John's

Jamaica, N.Y.

To the Editors: It is not the easiest thing in the world to defend yourself with your hands tied behind your back. But this is the position St. John's University finds itself vis-a-vis the vicious, false attack of Joseph A. Scimecca ["St. John's—Four Years After," 12/12/69].

Not only were "the professors and the arbitrators sworn to secrecy" in the arbitration proceedings, as Mr. Scimecca states. The University was equally sworn, and, unlike others (judging from some of Mr. Scimecca's information, however distorted), has honored and will continue to honor its pledge of confidentiality.

Certain facts, however, are either a matter of public knowledge or are not encompassed by the confidentiality of the proceedings and, therefore, this confidentiality will not be violated by exposing the falsity of a number of Mr. Scimecca's allegations:

1) I can state publicly and categorically that the University was never approached by Robert F. Wagner or by anyone speaking on his behalf "to mediate the dispute."

2) Mr. Wagner did not "become a member of the Board of Trustees under the mistaken assumption that the dispute" at the time of his election to and acceptance of membership on the Board. Nor do I believe that a man of his integrity ever "claimed" otherwise.

3) It is obviously untrue that "St. John's even turned down his offer," since no such offer was made.

4) I have no idea what the UFCT intends to do with the proceeds of its "$100,000 fund-raising drive." The University has from the outset assumed the entire cost of the arbitration fees and of all transcripts, both its own and the professors' share.

5) From the consideration of this enormous burden of expense, plus the University's legal and secretarial fees, etc., it should be obvious that St. John's

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THE PERFORMANCE GAP AGAIN

It isn't mere political petulance that prompts critics of the Nixon Administration to greet announcements of new policy with instinctive cynicism. The disconsonance between goals and means thereto is the distance between promise and reality. If the Nixon Administration is entirely serious about its grand objectives, it isn't at all persuasive in the means it outlines for reaching them. Skepticism, accordingly, is becoming a national trait.

Two developments of recent days nourish the cynicism: the Justice Department's persistence in seeking school desegregation delay in the South, and the Defense Department's moves to expand the anti-ballistic missile system. One can only wonder what the meaning is in all the Nixon talk about commitment to an integrated society and respect for Supreme Court directives. And what of the oratory of last spring about "measured deployment" and a "thin" ABM satisfying security needs? One must apply some sort of Pyrrhonian sliderule to everything the Administration says.

Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Administration's declaration of a "now or never" effort to end pollution should be received with marked dubiousness. The script follows old patterns too closely: ringing oratory ("I [RMN] have become further convinced that the 1970s absolutely must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters and our living environment"); weak machinery (the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which Mr. Nixon signed into law on the first day of the new decade); and weaker example (the new Nixon Budget would utilize only $214 million of the $800 million authorized under the Clear Water Restoration Act for grants to states for waste treatment works). Once again the public is led to expect far more than Mr. Nixon's will inclines him to make possible, and far more than can conceivably be delivered under the legislation devised to do the job.

The *New York Times* might be straining for effect when it editorializes that the environmental crisis is one "of life and death," but there is no gainsaying the fact that the crisis has long since passed the stage where environmental questions could be convenient avocation for the dilettante and secondary concern for government. Yet that is where Mr. Nixon's heralded new legislation pretty much leaves the issue.

The trouble with the Nixon approach is that here too it deals in palliatives: paltry $1 million-a-year budgets, "compact staff" and a three-member

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Council on Environmental Quality, whose function it will be, not to initiate program, but to recommend courses of action to the President. It's orderly procedure maybe, but much too off-hand for what the situation requires. The nature of the environmental crisis is such as to demand a policy-making agency of Cabinet rank, with generous budget, with power to consolidate activities (anti-pollution efforts are presently scattered through nine government bureaus), and with authority to correct the cross-purposes at which several departments now act (while the Interior Department is acquiring wetlands for waterfowl along major flyways, the Agriculture Department subsidizes farm drainage projects which dry up wetlands set aside for wildlife).

Nothing of strength is provided in the Environmental Policy Act, and nothing is promised except counsel to a President who hasn't taken past counsel in this area with any noticeable degree of urgency. All the Environmental Act is is a start, and not a very impressive one, toward attacking a problem of incredible magnitude. Not so long ago this start might have been adequate, but it isn't today. Mr. Nixon, in claiming all he does for the Act, is playing cruel with the people and reckless with the future.

Republican Strategy, Southern Fried

Here in Washington these days there is considerable self-righteous posturing by Northern Democrats as a result of something supposedly new—the "Southern strategy" of a national political party, in this case the Republican Party. There's also a perplexing display of scandalized finger-pointing by upper-echelon Democrats and their cheerleaders among the press and among the "lib-lab" lobbies.

Particular targets of this scorn by Democrats are the Attorney General of the United States, John Mitchell, and a Mr. Kevin Phillips, once a hired (political) gun for a right-wing Congressman, Paul Fino of the Bronx. Phillips, a young man very much taken with himself, is the author of a new book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*. Phillips proposes a grand design for a long-term, national political domination by the Republican Party in which the Southern states, heretofore nominally Democratic at least, would become a "bastion" of GOP strength. Attorney General Mitchell, according to the villainous role assigned him by the Democrats, is the *miseur-en-scène* for the Phillips scenario. Now it may be that Messrs. Mitchell and Phillips are liberals only in the sense that they believe in life after birth; nevertheless, the reaction of Democrats to all this is a bit unreflective—indeed, slightly indecent in a political sense. It simply reaffirms once again the *philosophes'* view that man is capable of a gross amount of self-deception. In this case, men of the Democratic Party of the North.

Hell, the Democrats invented "Southern strategy"; to coin a phrase, "Southern strategy" is as American as apple pie. A large portion of our domestic troubles, which President Nixon has inherited, is a direct result of an historic insistence of "national" Democratic Party leaders that the political Snopeses of the Southern states must be petted, cajoled, soft-soaped and otherwise bribed in order that a Northern Democrat may be elected President. No Democratic presidential candidate has escaped a role in this. Adlai Stevenson, that most sensitive of candidates, addressed Southern audiences not on the germane subject of "The American Dilemma" but on the meritorious, but dusty novels of Willa Cather. As for the Congress of the United States, the congressional wing of the Democratic Party was whelped in the snuggery of the segregationist states. It is forgotten that for most of this century the Southern wing not only dominated the Party in policies and deliberations, but that for many years the Southern wing *was* the Democratic Party. In 1921, in the House of Representatives, 99 of 134 Democrats (74 percent) were Southerners; in 1929, 101 of 190; during the New Deal years, about half, many of them still in the Congress. Only about one-third of the 240-plus House Democrats are Southerners in the present 91st Congress. But, more importantly at this writing, Southern Democrats serve as chairmen of all the key committees of the House—Agriculture, Appropriations, Armed Services, Rules, Ways and Means.

The situation is analogous over in the Senate. A Northerner has *never* chaired the Democratic "Committee on Committees," which every two years selects all Democrats for one or more assignments on the 21 standing legislative committees of the House. Until recently, Southern Democrats always constituted a majority of this little publicized but key committee. The few Northern Democratic men who have served as Speaker of the House since the Civil War have arrived at that exalted political station primarily by means of accommodations, sometimes lethal ones for liberal legislation, with Southern Democratic chieftains. On major social issues the Southerners are simply unable to extricate themselves from the segregationist flypaper. In the mid-1960's, for example, an able Southern Democrat, U.S. Rep. Carl Elliott, tried to soften the more brutal aspects of Alabama racialist politics. He lost his campaign for re-election. He was "out-raced." Today, the most vociferous among those denouncing anti-war demonstrators who carry the North Vietnam flag include Southerners whose own congressional offices display a Confederate emblem, their revered symbol of past treason and rebellion.

Deeply rooted Democratic "Southern strategy" means

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that in the United States Congress the rules of both the House of Representatives and the Senate are rigged to favor the views of Southerners on social issues. The greatest of the Speakers of the House, Thomas Brackett Reed of Maine, exposed this condition 80 years ago. "Ever since the slavery question came to trouble the peace of the country," Reed said, "the rules of the House have been framed with the view of rendering legislation difficult. The South was anxious that there should be ample means at its disposal to stop any measures detrimental to its cherished institutions." Substitute "race" for "slavery" in the first sentence and Reed's statement is as true in 1970.

Democratic "Southern strategy" means that the seniority system, that Southern parliamentary fortress built by an alliance of Southern Democrats and copperhead and dough-faced Northern Democratic men over the last 60 years, has seldom been challenged and only three times dented, twice in 1965 and once last year. Because iron-clad seniority is unscathed in 1970, Rep. Jamie Whitten of Mississippi, product of Democratic "Southern strategy," sits as chairman of the House appropriations subcommittee and, consequently, as top baron of the United States Department of Agriculture. In the face of current demands for an effective Federal food policy with which to feed the nation's hungry millions, Whitten is able to declare, without fear of penalty being levied by his consecrator, the Democratic Party: "When you start giving people something for nothing just giving them all they want for nothing, I wonder if you don't destroy character more than you might improve nutrition." The mind boggles at what Marie Antoinette would have accomplished if only she had possessed a smidgeon of Whitten's power and influence.

Legislative deficiencies in the poverty, education, welfare and health fields may be attributed to the "Southern strategy" of the Democratic Party. Illustratively, Southern Democrats successfully crippled the New Deal once the most brutal edges of raw poverty among Southern whites had abated in 1935.

Hopefully, the painful, scarring lesson has been learned by an increasing number of organizational Democrats. The shocks of ghetto burnings, cultural and political genocide of non-white Americans, three political assassinations and other unlovely aspects of American life have finally shoved many congressional Democrats into the foothills of political change. But the political consequences have been explained interestingly by Rep. William Scott, a Republican from Virginia, during floor debate last November on an unsuccessful effort to extend the life of the highly successful Voting Rights Act of 1965 that has done so much to facilitate black registration in the South.

"This is regional (i.e. Southern) legislation," Scott admonished. ". . . It could well have the effect of driving some of our Democratic colleagues from the South into the Republican Party. They might be more appreciated and more comfortable there. It will certainly have the effect of hastening the rebuilding of a strong Republican Party in the South . . ."

Democrats, while chastising Mitchell and Phillips, may simultaneously be tempted to encourage the Republican movement in the direction of taking title to "Southern strategy." However, Democrats should resist their impulse to applaud such an act of political cooption by their Republican colleagues. National Democratic political strategists are superbly equipped, because of their skill in hatching segregationist schemes, to help the nation pose to itself an important question: "Is this nation so ungovernable and so fragile in respect to both its size and its diversity of people that a 'Southern strategy' must be a paramount consideration by any political party that purports to be national in scope?"

Right on, Farley and Bailey and O'Brien. Tell us like it is!

WES BARTHELMES

(Wes Barthelmes is Administrative Assistant to Missouri Congressman Richard Bolling.)

AN APPEAL FOR COMMONWEAL

It is twenty years since *Commonweal* made a general appeal to our readers for funds. Now we are forced to do it once again. Rising costs are squeezing us hard. Printing, paper, postage—all our major costs have gone up sharply in the last three years, far more than our increased subscription price. Advertising of religious books, long a mainstay, is seriously down as part of a general decline in religious publishing. Already a handful of Catholic magazines and newspapers have gone out of existence, and more will follow them. It is our hope that readers of this magazine will help us prevent *Commonweal* from going down that path.

As most of our readers know, this magazine is an independent publication, now forty-five years old, published and edited by Roman Catholic laymen. It has no big angels, no subsidy by religious order or rich foundation. Other journals in this situation appeal regularly to their readers for funds, but over the last two decades we have managed to keep this magazine alive and, we hope, vigorous, without such an appeal. Now we must raise $46,000 to assure continued publication, and a letter appealing for help has just been mailed to all subscribers. Despite the apparent turmoil of the present religious scene, we remain convinced of the value of a lay-edited magazine that concerns itself week after week with both church and world. We will be grateful for any contribution, large or small, from readers who share this conviction.

THE EDITORS

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PETER STEINFELS

The Talk of the Town

Speed Listening

We were mildly mortified one rainy day last month when the daily post brought notice of a new course in Speed Listening. Speed Listening? Why, we had never even dreamed of such a phenomenon, we who put so much store in the town's talk. And yet, why not?

"Everyone agrees that being a good listener is a precious quality," explained the amiable young man who was presiding over the office of the American Institute of Speed Listening. We admitted that no one had put in a good word for *bad* listeners lately. "But like the weather," our friend pointed out, "nobody does anything about it."

Nobody but the young man, that is, whose name, it turned out, is Corliss Finchter, and who addressed us from behind a gray, reconditioned Steelcase desk, cluttered with brochures, earphones, a portable radio, and various unidentifiable scraps of electronic apparatus. Mr. Finchter's Institute is located in the second story of an inconspicuous white clapboard house nestled among the glass and steel towers of Sixth Avenue. Director and sole employee of the establishment, Mr. Finchter speaks very fast, as befits his station, and we did our best to keep up.

"I first became interested in listening at the age of sixteen," he explained, "when I strained my left ear at a discotheque. The doctors covered my right ear with an ear-patch to force me to listen more sharply with the left and thus strengthen it. Two years later I had recovered completely, but this experience with deafness led me to a new discovery. Like Alexander Graham Bell, I believe. Once the patch was removed, I found myself hearing better than ever—listening faster is the only accurate way to describe it."

Mr. Finchter led us into an adjoining room. Except for two or three hundred speakers covering the walls and ceiling, it looked like an ordinary college language laboratory. Finchter twirled a dial causing the speakers to emit a soft whistle, which sent half a dozen cockroaches scurrying out of the equipment. He said that he had studied and experimented for five years, attempting to analyze his own experience and elaborate the basic principles of Speed Listening. Meanwhile he also earned a degree at a Baptist Bible College in British Columbia. "My father was a failed preacher. I went to school for his sake, sneaking out of the dormitory at night to carry on my research in those quiet Canadian nights."

Finchter propped himself against a row of speakers and stabbed at a friendly cockroach with his well-manicured forefinger. "There are three major pillars to my Speed Listening technique. The first is simple enough — Audio-isometrics — pitting one ear against the other one. We don't actually do Audio-isometric exercises here at the Institute. The students do them in their spare time, on the train, say, or at the water cooler, fifteen minutes a day. That usually doubles their listening speed in about six weeks." Mr. Finchter suddenly left us standing among the booths and headsets while he rushed to the front office and switched on a radio.

"Audio-isometrics lead naturally to the second principle I recognized during my research," he told us when he had returned. "*Audio-individuation.* That simply means learning to listen with each ear independently. You know, like playing different melodies on the piano with your right and left hands. In a single stroke, our students here double their listening capacity once again."

Didn't Audio-individuation cancel the three-dimensional character of ordinary hearing, we asked. Mr. Finchter readily admitted that this was so. "Man's hearing is thoroughly obsolete. Three-dimensionality is a vestige of the epoch of Man-the-Hunter, when it was necessary to know as precisely as possible just where that twig had snapped. Man's dinner, and maybe his life, depended on it. But all that is changed today. We're not hunters in a hostile jungle. It's time to make better use of the happy fact that we have two ears. Personally, I suspect that Audio-individuation is only speeding up the course that evolution would take anyway."

The success of stereophonic audio equipment does not faze Mr. Finchter. "That's promotion and prestige," he told us. "Take the situation of your average music-lover. How many records are listed in the current LP catalogue? It would take a lifetime to listen to them. But with Audio-individuation he can listen to two records at the same time. Thanks to Audio-isometrics he can play long-playing records at 72 rpm without missing a note. Once he realizes that Speed Listening provides him with more than four times as much music as he gets now in the same amount of time, I don't think he will worry about the finer details of stereophonic listen-

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THE MESSIANIC CORE

The left tradition in church and society

ROSEMARY RUETHER

I would like to contend that the left tradition in Western society has its roots in the Christian church, however foreign it may appear to established churchmanship. To put this quite simply, the left is secular messianism, which is to say Christianity in its radical basis and principle. The messianic core of Christianity has been continually suppressed in mainstream establishment Christianity, and has flowed as an underground stream, erupting again and again as the power of this vision is recovered. This eruption of the messianic occurred again and again in medieval and Reformation times down to the eighteenth century as radical church renewal and has risen since that time in the form of secular revolutionary movements.

Messianism represents the ever renewed hope for the coming of the redeemed community in a redeemed world as this hope has arisen in a 'religious' context in late medieval and Reformation radicalism and in a secular context in social revolutionary movements from the French Revolution down to our own times. In its Christian context in late medieval and Reformation radicalism, the left tradition exhibited an effort to abolish the distinction between ecclesial renewal and world renewal. The messianic community is not a special ecclesiastical community with a special problematic distinguishable from the redemption of the community of man, but rather the church or the Christian community (the messianic community) is simply the human community itself viewed from the perspective of God's Spirit which is making all things new.

Thus it should not surprise us that if we study the principles of the radical Christian movements of late medieval and Reformation times, we find striking analogies to left-wing social movements of modern times; socialism, Marxism and utopian and anarchistic communism. On the other hand, much the same dynamic is again arising at the present time as radical church renewal among Catholic Christians especially. The impact of the messianic tradition appears to be less due to organic historical continuity than to a spontanéous recovery of principles of life which arise whenever there is a time of crisis, radical change and new hope. In each case the messianic community sees itself as a revolutionary brotherhood which is the vanguard of a world-transforming redemptive history.

Nineteenth-century socialism particularly exhibits many striking analogies to the problems of Christian theology and ecclesiology. Socialism quickly fanned out into several distinct approaches to the world-historical, redemptive process. Some, like the Social Democrats and Christian Socialists, preferred a gradualistic, evolutionary concept of growth toward a socialized human community without radical breaks with the past. Others believed in experimentalism that would move into a new possibility of human communal relationship here and now as a model for the rest of society.

Somewhat distinct from the utopian socialists are the anarchist and syndicalist communists of the left-wing tradition who insisted that the revolutionary brotherhood must remain within and be identified with mass revolutionary participation on the grass-roots level. This left-wing tradition has recently been rejuvenated by the French student-left who used it in their struggle against bureaucratic communism and unionism. Others, like the Marxists, believed in a total revolutionary upheaval; a

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worldwide day of judgment that would depose the alienated society once and for all and inaugurate the classless society of restored community between man and his own creative powers in community with other men and all nature.

In effect, the socialists were struggling with the same dialectic of history and transcendence, albeit in a socio-scientific language, of the Christian or messianic tradition. The alternative views of how socialism is to come about is very similar to alternative types of Christian theology and Christian views of the church. Evolutionary socialists have appealed to Christians of the established churches with their view of redemptive history as a continuous progressive drama, whereas utopian and revolutionary socialists have their affinities with the left-wing church tradition.

The affinities of utopian socialism and Christian utopianism was exhibited in nineteenth century America, when socialists of Owenite and Fourierist persuasion brought their experiments to this continent, not only because America itself has something of a utopian tradition that made this congenial, but also because this was the one place where Christian utopians still prospered. Socialists frequently made the tour of communities such as the Shakers and the Rappites to receive practical tips on how such communist societies were organized. Robert Owen even bought out the plant of a utopian pietist community of Harmony, Indiana and re-christened it 'New Harmony' as the site of his socialist experiment.

The Marxist revolutionary socialists, on the other hand, looked back with considerable interest upon the apocalyptic and revolutionary Anabaptists of the 16th century Reformation and the 17th century Puritan Revolution. Marxist thinkers, such as F. Engels, Ernst Bloch, Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky wrote historical studies of the apocalyptic, left-wing tradition in Christianity, both in the primitive church and among left-wing Christians of the 16th and 17th centuries. One might say also that contemporary Christian-Marxist dialogue is made possible, from the Marxist side, by this traditional sense of affinity with the left-wing Christian tradition, whereas Christians discover a basis for dialogue with Marxists by a recovery of elements of this same left-wing tradition. As Roger Garaudy makes clear in his book, *From Anathema to Dialogue*, it is not on the basis of Constantinian Christianity, but on the basis of the left-wing Christianity of messianism, judgment upon contemporary society and hope for a new world to come that Christian-Marxist dialogue is possible. Moreover, this dialogue demands that Marxism itself recover its left-wing revolutionary tradition as over against the Marxist form of Constantinianism: Stalinism.

The radical tradition also has close affinities with new-left movements today as well as the allied counterpart in radical church renewal. One may then say that messianism is the root of the ever reborn 'new left' which experiences in its depth and profundity the daemonism of present reality and a longing for a new and authentic world not yet born. 'The Revolution' can be seen as the socio-scientific version of the Christian myth of world redemption through apocalyptic crisis and, as such, continues to be perhaps the dominant salvation myth of the West and increasingly of the whole world.

American Catholic Experience

American Catholics, it seems to me, have been convulsed in recent years by an upsurge of this radical expectation for which they have little conscious precedent within their own tradition. Radicalism has gripped American Catholics both in terms of church renewal and in terms of social renewal, and these two streams of messianism have converged for them in a way which is very confusing. We might explain this by saying that Roman Catholics in America have experienced the dying of two gods at once; the death of the god of the holy, truthful church and the death of the god of the good, just, peace-loving and freedom-loving American. The ground has been pulled out from under us on both sides and we hardly know where to stand. We experience a feeling of being at the end of all our worlds, and feel that to continue on in these worlds within their own presuppositions is certain death.

There is no more frightening experience than to see the gods of your childhood unmasked and revealed as death-dealing idols which kill in the name of life, which make war in the name of peace, which lie in the name of truth, which crush men's souls in the name of freedom. How can we rescue these ideals without being tarred by the dead hand that now grips them? This is the difficult problematic in which we are involved and this is not resolved by a neat dialectic of authentic being and fallen existence, for this fallen existence is not a theological abstraction that can be dissipated by a formula, but it is a concrete power which governs our lives and prevents new life from happening and new world from being born.

The radical instinctively feels that to remain within present structures in a reformist way is inevitably to accept their present presuppositions tacitly if not actively, and so to give a new lease on life to the inauthentic society which they represent, instead of bringing this inauthentic life of man to an end so something quite different can be born. Continuity with the past is felt to be the continuation of this same past. Only when the very presuppositions of the present structures are cut can a possibility not based on these presuppositions come about.

This kind of reasoning indicates that we have reached a point in our church and social history when the sense of radical crisis becomes operative, but also all the insoluble problematics of such a crisis also reappear.

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The mind oscillates back and forth between different approaches without being able to find any synthesis which is not tautological. If we break with present forms of church or society, is this not to be simply irrelevant? Is this not to surrender any possibility of change such as is only possible by working within what presently exists? But if we work within what presently exists, is this not to tacitly legitimize it and so to minimalize the profundity of the crisis?

The radical thus tends to pose this kind of question to himself: "If we had any real moral apprehension of what it means for a Pope to lie to the whole world in order to justify his own infallibility, would we not have to throw ourselves upon this wretched temple like some latter-day Samson, or at least make unambiguously clear our total disassociation with it?" "If we really took seriously what it means to justify for 300 years systematized disorder, lawlessness and mayhem against the black American, how can we justify ourselves being anywhere except in jail? Simply to walk around in pretense of freedom with the white-skin privilege which we automatically enjoy is to perpetuate the bondage of our brother." "If we really assess in its proper proportions the military madness in which we are presently involved, the spectacle of a nation whose priorities and resources are almost totally given over to bigger and better ways of death, how is it possible to call ourselves Americans without demeaning the very soil from which we have sprung?" Confronted with this kind of question, the mind begins to reel and one feels compelled to take the most 'radical' step in order to achieve any moral consistency.

Black Theology

This sense of radical judgment and the need for violent separation as the only appropriate response to the profundity of the antithesis has had the black experience and the black spokesman as its continual point of reference. For example, in James Cone's recent book on *Black Theology and Black Church*, LeRoi Jones is quoted as saying that the "role of the Black artist is to aid in the destruction of America as he has known it." Cone then continues: "His role is to report and reflect so precisely the nature of this society that other men will be moved by the exactness of his rendering, and, if they are Black men, to grow strong through this moving, having seen their own strength and weakness, and if they are white men, to tremble, curse and go mad, because they will be drenched with the filth of their evil."

Here then is that sense of radical judgment, crisis and profound disparity between good and evil which is at the heart of the prophetic and apocalyptic message. Its strength and its truth lies in this profound sense of judgment. But it is precisely in its effort to leap into the new world, the new possibility beyond, that its problematic appears. The radical typically falls into sectarianism and purism because of his inability to separate his role as spokesman for God's purity from his own human existence. Perhaps it is therefore all the more important that Cone follows the statement quoted above with:

"If I am critical of white America, it is because this is *my* country, and what is mine must not be spared all my emotional and intellectual concern. Although my motive in writing this book was not—did not dare to be—dependent upon the response of white people, I do not rule out the possibility of creative changes, even in the lives of the oppressors. It is illegitimate to sit in judgment on another man, deciding how he will or must respond. That is another form of oppression."

Is it possible to keep these two poles together in the midst of such frightful tension? Is it possible both to give the name of the apocalyptic beast to one's own country, to one's own people, and at the same time to affirm your solidarity with this country, this people? This is the basic dilemma of the radical and his ability to keep these two poles together determines whether he retains his own soul or spins off in destructive fanaticism.

The insight into the radicality of the human dilemma then is the truth of the radical position. Its falsehood and the source of endless new tyrannies erected upon the ashes of the old lie in its simplistic application of this insight. One imagines that one can separate from the city to the country, or by taking off the gaudy clothes and putting on plain clothes or calling one another sister and brother instead of Lord and master. But the country utopia soon recreates all the problems of the city, the plain clothes and the familial names become new status symbols and titles of address.

In a similar way in secular movements, one imagines that one can leave white America by traveling from North to South, from suburb to inner city or by leaving the invisible prison for the visible prison. In effect, one tries to perpetuate the revelatory gesture as itself a means of salvation. But the gesture breaks its heart on the stubborn reality, and the vanguard of the classless society becomes a new ruling class. Yet this doesn't excuse us from venturing our existence in some way. The temptation perhaps lies in the effort to negate the uncertainty of the outcome.

In effect, whether we choose to operate within or without, the problematic is not essentially different. In either situation we must both reject the evil principle yet continue to suffer in its midst. We have to purge out the 'old honkey' without expecting to earn an ultimate badge of approval from the oppressed. Our task is to remain at this point of tension where the disparity between man's true self and his fallen existence appears without panicking into one-sided solutions on either side. We do this, moreover, in deep uncertainty as to when or how this disparity is to be overcome and man reconciled to himself. The most we can say is, with St. Paul, "it is in this hope that we are saved."

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MR. NIXON'S VOLUNTARISM

Whatever happened to a campaign idea?

AMITAI ETZIONI

Reluctantly, liberal Democrat that I am, I must admit that the Nixon Administration has come up with a rather good idea. It is a not completely original and rather tricky conception and has not yet been advanced very far. But it surely points in the right direction. I refer to Nixon's plan to activate a large variety of private citizens, groups, and institutions to launch and fuel overdue domestic reforms.

In a major campaign address, Nixon spoke about "the voluntary way," reminded us that there are more than one million voluntary associations in America and quoted a Gallup Poll which estimated that 6 million adult Americans would be willing to contribute 245 million man-hours a *week* to voluntary activities. A Gallup Poll of students only, released on June 20, 1968, states: "The traditional goals of college students of making money and 'getting ahead in the world' appear to have lost some of their charm. No less than two college students in every three said they would have an interest in working either in VISTA or the Peace Corps." The "two out of every three" refers to a population of five million.

President Nixon struck the keynote in his inaugural address. "We are approaching the limits of what government alone can do. Our greatest need now is to reach beyond government, to enlist the legions of the concerned and the committed." *The Washington Post* added [Jan. 26] that "some presidential aides say this program of government-encouraged 'voluntary action' will be 'a central theme' of the new Administration."

The plans call, according to White House sources, for corporations, trade associations, labor unions, churches, foundations, universities, PTAs, and others to help solve social problems by volunteering time, skills and money. Executives are to show Negroes how to run businesses; housewives are to teach disadvantaged women to shop and help elderly people to cook; college students are to provide free tutoring; etc.

This is in line with the Nixonian concept, to return to his take-off address: "to match the magnitude of our tasks, we need the energies of our people—enlisted not only in grand enterprises, but more importantly in those small, splendid efforts that make headlines in the neighborhood newspaper instead of the national journal." Nixon is to promote voluntary efforts in TV appearances the way "FDR did for the March of Dimes," a White House aide told Alan L. Otten, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter.

Plans were floated to set up a White House office to steer the volunteer drives and to coordinate them, especially by collecting and sharing information on the various projects to be undertaken. A special award was considered for the most active volunteers; they would receive insignia they could pin on their lapels.

If the citizens are to participate more actively, they must be kept informed and with as much candor as possible. On February 10th Nixon instructed the Federal departments and agencies "to get statistics to the public faster and on a fixed schedule." The directive, issued via the Bureau of the Budget, ordered that "no more than two days should elapse between the time figures are ready and their release to the public." And, the President stated, "a particular statistical series must be released on the same day each week, month or quarter." Under LBJ, release dates were re-scheduled not infrequently to suit political needs.

Attorney General John N. Mitchell picked up the theme in a speech he delivered at a conference sponsored by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. He startled his audience and the press when he proposed that a National United Anti-Crime Fund be established to finance and coordinate citizens' crime control efforts on local as well as national levels. Mitchell pointed out that $699 millions were raised in 1968 by United Fund campaigns. If only 10 percent of this were alloted to anti-crime measures, Mitchell said, this sum would exceed Federal contributions to local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts!

Other cabinet members are even more on the voluntary beam than the President. Even before Nixon turned it on, Robert Finch projected it as a key element in his 1966 campaign in California, and George Romney applied it when he was Governor of Michigan. Recently, he was appointed to head the subcommittee on voluntary action of the new Urban Affairs Council.

At Washington cocktail parties, the book most often quoted is no longer Pat Moynihan's attack on social scientists and LBJ's war-on-poverty but Peter Drucker's *The Age of Discontinuity*. "Reprivatization" is the new catch phrase, meaning returning to the private sector missions now in Federal hands, with the Federal govern-

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ment conducting the orchestra rather than playing all the instruments. One columnist called for the appointment of Drucker as Special Aide to the President, as a person closer in spirit to the new Administration than Harry Kissinger, not to mention Daniel P. Moynihan.

Even before Nixon was settled in the White House, he assigned one task-force, headed by Richard Cornuelle, to study the "voluntary" way and launched two "participatory" programs. In one, citizens' views were recorded on government tape recorders (beginning in Birmingham, Alabama, and Westchester County, New York), to be brought—well, some of them—to the President's ear. In the other, 80,000 citizens listed in *Who's Who* were invited to recommend people for top administrative posts.

The least reported idea may well be the best one. One of the groups most prone to take to the streets, one with no legitimate political outlet, is that aged 18 to 21. Nixon promised during the campaign to work for a lower limit on the voting age and on Feb. 10, he directed his Attorney General to "study the possibilities." If achieved, this would not only give the youth a vote but would make politicians more attentive to their needs and views.

Difficulties

The conception behind the voluntary way and citizen participation is quite clear. Our problems are enormous; while the society is affluent, the government is poor. Mobilizing the energies of the private sector would yield more than money—it would bring in free manpower skills. And, in return, the drive would give the youth and many solid citizens what they are lacking—a sense of meaning, of sharing in a worthy project, and of belonging. Participating in these drives would build up citizens' commitments not only to the specific programs but also to the American way of life. More politically, if some of these programs fail, the Administration would not be the target of criticism. If they succeed, it still could reap much of the credit for having initiated the voluntary wave.

Thus, in theory, Nixon has brought up a valid, even an exciting conception. There are, though, several "catches," some of which are already slowing down the drive. One is the problem of "follow-through" which plagues Federal programs. It is one thing to task-force a program and "talk it up," quite another to de-bug, launch, sustain and carry it through. If the government is to launch a whole flotilla of voluntary drives, it will require much more of a push than Nixon and his Cabinet have given it so far. Thus, rather typically, as these lines are being written, little more has been heard from Mitchell about the Anti-Crime Fund or lowering the voting age. The White House Office for Volunteer Services remains, as far as I can ascertain, an aide's wishful thinking. No more citizen-taping or mailing to *Who's Who* has been reported.

And, relying on volunteer staffs to carry out any projects is a hazardous business. Volunteers' enthusiasm can be rapidly aroused at the start, but wanes with equal rapidity. Volunteers are notoriously unreliable—and cannot be fired or otherwise penalized when they don't show up, neglect their assignments, etc. Actually, it is quite accurate to state that the voluntary way is often the most expensive way to get a thing done. Some foundations have used as much as half of the money they raise on administration and public relations.

Voluntarism is hardly a new idea; hence, there is a large body of experience upon which to draw. Aside from the Peace Corps and VISTA, there are thousands of students who regularly tutor slum children free-of-charge under a project coordinated by the National Student Association and whose administration is financed by OEO. Volunteers work for the Red Cross and in many hospitals. 83,000 volunteers are reported participating on 150 community-action governing boards, etc. The full list is so long that quite a few volunteers could occupy themselves by completing and updating it.

The experience of these voluntarily-fueled drives indicates that their success required considerable "programing" and training. A former key staff member of the Peace Corps explained: "For ten percent [of the volunteers] all we would have to do is pay their fares. They are imaginative, energetic, and versatile enough to find their own assignments, and carry them out drawing on whatever skills they have. But for most volunteers a *role* must be first thought-out, specified, and then—the volunteers prepared for it. It is easiest for teaching, because there is a relatively clear task and one for which a volunteer can be relatively easily coached. But most other assignments, for instance, those involved in community-action, are not at all clear. And, without considerable executive input, even supervision, little if nothing will be done, resulting in loss of momentum, a morale crisis, and rejection of the volunteers by the community and voluntarism by the volunteers."

During the 1967 six-day war in the Middle East, hundreds of young Jews jumped on airplanes and flew to Israel to help. Fight they could not (they were not trained and could lose their American citizenship), and the Israelis had little time or mind to screen, assign, and train them for other pursuits. Quite a few ended up working the kitchens of *Kibbutzim* or marking time on the farms.

The list of tasks volunteers may be prepared to do in this country may at first seem as long as the list of American social problems. But again experience speaks louder. My Peace Corps informant grew increasingly depressed, as he recalled the prolonged negotiations and complicated maneuvers the Peace Corps had to go through to get teachers' associations to permit Peace Corps trainees to practice-teach, without their having had the prescribed teachers' training courses. The associations saw such Peace Corps activity as threatening professional standards—and the employment opportunities for qualified

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teachers if the Corpsmen were to continue to teach upon their return home. One major reason that the Teacher Corps, a Johnson program, never took-off is the strenuous opposition of the organized teachers and the labor movement.

The fear of generating cheap labor which would result in the unemployment of "legitimate" workers is considerable, especially when reference is made to millions of volunteers, as do Nixon *et al.* One of the best thought-out voluntary programs is that of a year or two of National Service for all Americans who reach high-school graduation age. The AFL-CIO Executive Council, in a meeting held Feb. 27, 1967, responded to this idea, but addressed itself in effect to all voluntary work: "The National Service concept raises serious problems. . . . An artificially low pay rate will result in the emergence of a large manpower pool unfairly competing with the remainder of the labor force."

In a conference dedicated to the National Service idea, Jacob Clayman, the Administrative Director of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, put the point like this: ". . . If such unfair competition were indeed the result of a National Service, its entire worth would be vitiated. If, in the process of providing socially valuable goods and services as well as wholesome training for youths, we destroy the economic standards of their elders, we indeed would be jumping from the frying pan into the fire."

Teachers, nurses, social workers, construction workers, and businessmen (once new, non-white businesses get preferential treatment) are not about to dance in the streets for the voluntary way. Once the features of Nixon's "active society" become more evident, and if it is not carefully designed so that existing labor and business are fully protected, these groups are more likely to treat the program like football players—that is, the way they "welcome" the other team.

Spirit of the Times

Second, voluntarism does not thrive in a vacuum. The Peace Corps flourished in the Kennedy period, but its appeal has declined both as it aged and as large segments of the American youth grew alienated from their government, even their country, following the continued escalation of the war in Vietnam and riots in the cities.

Nixon, who has overcome more than one handicap which seemed unbeatable, may yet become an inspiring figure to American youth, academia, and the educated middle class—the mainstays of voluntary action. But before this can happen, he must get the country out of the Vietnamese war without getting it into another and become a recognized friend of the minorities and a true champion of domestic reforms. Only then will he be able to generate the kind of commitment a broad-based volunteer drive would require.

The "cool," professional, business-like atmosphere Nixon has deliberately evoked so far has served to soothe the country's nerves, and has built up confidence in his Administration without generating undue expectations, both welcome achievements. But it does not generate the sense of mission, of desire to help "get the country moving again," which the early Kennedy days elicited. At that point, it seems to me, the readiness to volunteer peaked. There is as yet no King who will do for the Nixon volunteers, even the businessmen, what Martin Luther did for the civil rights movement; not even what FDR did for the March of Dimes.

Should the voluntary drive take off, a whole set of secondary problems would loom up that are barely visible now. Implicit in the call—"let us all get out there and lend a helping hand"—is the notion that we are all fellow-citizens who share the same basic views of what needs to be done and how best to do it. Actually, the main source of volunteers—the local establishments (corporations, Chambers of Commerce, labor unions, PTAs) and the anti-establishment groups (students, active Negroes, Democrats and some left-of-liberal housewives)—have rather opposing views of America and the ways it may be transformed.

If the voluntary wave is to be channeled mainly through the local establishments, it will inevitably be colored by their interests and prejudices. Over recent years, Federal government has become a persistent force, however weak, in enforcing some desegregation and a measure of reallocation of wealth in favor of the poor. If the main force for domestic programs is not to be transferred to local elites, voluntary help for the needy in the South is sure to be segregated as well as "token" in scope. Sharecroppers in Florida can expect about the same help from local businessmen as the grape-pickers in California. There may be a local drive against crime in Wilmington, Delaware, or Cicero, Illinois, but it will not be much more observant of civil rights than the Ku Klux Klan. The danger of the local anti-crime activists turning from fund-raisers into vigilantes cannot be ignored. More donations to hospitals? This sounds just fine, but they will certainly be directed to non-government hospitals—i.e., mainly to institutions segregated by race and class.

One of the major advances of recent years has been growing recognition that paternalism will not do. Both to overcome their psychic hang-ups, resulting from a long-held sense of inferiority, and to secure their continued support for projects after they are launched, participation of the disadvantaged is essential. But most of the programs cited by Nixon's aides seem quite reminiscent of the old let-me-show-you-how-to-do-it variety (rather than let-me give-you-a-chance-to-learn-from-your-own-mistakes), and evoke scenes of small handouts and hand-me-downs from corporations, "paternal" groups, and PTAs. I can just see the local Elks in Columbus, Ohio, or Palo Alto, California driving up to the nearest slums in their new Buicks to de-

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liver a check for the construction of a community see-saw.

Several of the suburban matrons who donned their aprons and came—mop-in-hand—to the "inner city" for one day, to swab the streets and paint the houses of Harlem (a few blocks, that is), complained that they were not well-received. More prolonged contact of middle-class volunteers with the ghetto will require at least considerable preparation in the difficult art of "cross-cultural" communication.

Even with such preparation, there is only a rather limited set of tasks which middle-class white people could hope to accomplish in most contemporary black neighborhoods. They could merely deposit checks and run, but even this—the lessons of foreign aid suggest—may not be appreciated. Black community leaders feel that the United States owes them, as one of them put it, about $400 billion in back pay. They are unlikely to thank politely the March of Dimes, even if its baskets were emptied at their doorsteps. Voluntarism, though, thrives on recognition

of the effort *and* the intent. Without continued psychic rewarding (which absorbs much of the time spent in fund-raising by organizations such as the United Jewish Appeal or Community Chest), the guilt which motivates the donation is quickly quenched and the stream dries up.

This is not to suggest that much could not be achieved by mobilizing the private community. But more government money, and guidance as well as monitoring will be required if massive drives, once launched, are not to be deflected, to become anti-Black, paternalistic, and ignorant of the needs of youth.

If anti-establishment groups were to gain an upper hand at the helm of volunteer campaigns, as they have of the one to organize welfare clients to demand the full benefits they are entitled to, the clashes with local elites—and the Nixon Administration—would be even more resounding than those encountered by community-action cadres during the Johnson period. Anti-establishmentarians are already forcing the "clarification" of a key feature of Nixonian voluntarism, one which the astute President may well prefer to leave befuddled. Conservative groups hope that voluntarism will *replace* government efforts in behalf of the needy, not only future programs but also existing ones. Liberal groups hope that Nixon's voluntarism will *add to* but not deflect attention from additional "urgently needed," to use the argot, "government initiatives."

Thus, Richard C. Cornuelle, a former official of the National Association of Manufacturers, and his co-NAMer, A. Wright Elliott, speak for those who wish "individualism" to replace federal welfarism, "maybe within a decade." At the same time, Roy Wilkins, for NAACP, is quoted as saying, "tax incentives and tax credits or government subsidies of private enterprise [by the way, hardly pure voluntarism] must not become substitutes for sound, publicly financial programs in employment, housing and community facilities."

Could the Nixon Administration "bring us together," help initiate local voluntary projects in which a broad spectrum of the local communities would participate, argue out their differences, learn from each other, and come to share in these endeavors, we would surely be ahead. One skeptically hopeful person, trying hard to stay open-minded about the new Administration and especially about the New Nixon, stated:

"If he would come through on this one, if he would inspire the youth, the intellectuals, and fire up the social conscience of the business community. . . . If he could give the nation a sense of mission, meaning, accomplishment on the domestic front, the kind of excitement nations usually generate in war—why he would make a *great* President!"

But there is no sign that efforts to involve a broad coalition of groups are being undertaken, indeed even that the difficult problems of community-wide non-paternalistic voluntarism are understood.

Anyhow, at present it seems rather far-fetched to worry about who the volunteers will be and how they will relate to each other and to the needs of their communities. As the burdens of foreign policy, traditionally Nixon's major preoccupation, and those of domestic Federal reorganization and management become very real, Nixon seems to pay less and less attention to promoting his "central theme"—the voluntary way. There are increasing signs that the "voluntary way" is favored more by two Nixon speech-writers and some members of his now defunct task force on voluntarism, e.g., Richard Goodwin, than by the President himself. There is a nagging sense that maybe Nixon did not really "mean it," despite the somewhat measured enthusiasm he put forth, and that maybe we are into a new crisis of credibility. Two people who told me rather proudly that they had been invited to write recommendation letters to Nixon are now rather disillusioned; nobody they carefully recommended was appointed, and they never heard why their favorites were disregarded. The other 50,000-odd citizens who wrote, and those who felt relieved taking their grievances to the President himself, via tapes, are now feeling increasingly uneasy; "they have not heard from him" (not even a brief acknowledgment note of the kind ground out by the machines). Nor have they seen that their anguished expressions had any effect. Aroused citizens who pulled out

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their checkbooks and pens following Mitchell's appeal have yet to be told where to mail their anti-crime contributions. And suburban housewives all steamed up, have now returned to the routine of their local charities.

Students of management, aspiring new executives, are taught a subject entitled "Human Relations." They are told to be sensitive to others, to learn to listen, to give others a sense of participation and importance. There are, though, basically two ways to proceed in improving human relations. One is really to open up, to share information and decisions and involve subordinates in the enterprise. The other is to pretend to do all these things, to make all the right "noises" and gestures and talk about sharing without really opening up at all. For a while, the gestures work almost as well as the real thing; people are taken in, are excited by the newly "sensitive" management. They believe in it. But, slowly, the inauthenticity of the gestures is revealed. Then, the early confidence is replaced by a double sense of frustration—one over the issues which are not being faced and, two, over the fact that people have been taken for a ride, turned into suckers.

It is much too early to tell what the Nixon voluntary way will amount to. But, increasingly, it all seems like Vicki Cole's trip to Washington, D.C. Vicki carried the placard with the slogan, "Bring us together again." On Nixon's order, she was flown to Washington for the inauguration, put on the prow of a leading float, escorted to the grand balls. Nobody seemed to mind that Vicki never wrote the placard she held up; she picked it up at random after she lost her own. No recognition was extended to whoever it was who did come up with the useful slogan. Nor was there any sense of proportion to the rewarding of Vicki's brief and not too arduous enterprise. It was a "P.R." gesture—very glossy and quite inauthentic. Maybe an augury of things to come?

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RICHARD SNYDER

TO D.M., MY WRITING STUDENT, UPON HIS FIRST SUBMISSIONS

Your Pallas Athena poems—so
lately leapt from your forehead—have gone
from you now, and you're like Christian
Morgenstern's Palmström tense before his
Emporium for Small Gladnesses,
which, after all, is what poetry
is: bright foreign reports to homelands
of ourselves, a keeping in touch by
nonchalance. Homing poems will fit
the letter-slot, for to make them slide
under the world's door, Dan, is our plot.

NOT MY TOWN

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THE STAGE

There was a time when *Our Town* was ubiquitous, when George and Emily climbed ladders on every junior-high stage in America. It seems impossible, then, that I could have reached my age without seeing Thornton Wilder's most famous play at least once. Yet, until I saw the Plumstead Playhouse revival at the ANTA Theatre, I knew *Our Town* only on the page. It is unfortunate that this production should have been my initiation.

I have made public testimony [*Commonweal*, Feb. 7, 1958] to my admiration for Thornton Wilder, and I have fought on many a classroom barricade, defending *Our Town* from students who wanted to dismiss it as a simple exercise in sentiment. For me, it has always seemed—still does, in the abstract—an extremely sophisticated play, one that uses all the clichés of the American small town at the turn of the century to make the point that the quality of life is in its presumably banal detail and its heart in the inescapable birth-death cycle. I can understand how the kids in East Harlem, whose production of the play was reported in the *New York Times* last August 14, should react to the surface of the play, finding it bewilderingly simple, unable to make the connection between Grover's Corners and the streets and alleys of New York which, as one youthful actor understated, "are not very nice." What I cannot understand is the kind of smart-ass condescension in which more knowing observers respond to that sentimental surface, refuse to go beneath it and blame their response on the playwright. Dwight Macdonald's put-down in "Masscult & Midcult," in which it never crosses his mind that the Stage Manager may be an ironic device and not a fount of wisdom, is a good example of the kind of commentary I mean.

The distressing thing about the *Our Town* revival is that it is less a celebration of Wilder than a capitulation to his critics. The play is after all not "practically actor-proof." Macdonald used that phrase, explaining the play's popularity with amateur acting groups, but what he meant presumably was that anyone who could walk a stage could find the easy tear and the obvious laugh in the Wilder play. Settling for that tear, that laugh, however, is destructive to what is best in *Our Town,* and the production at the ANTA is out for the easiest effects. The scene between George and Emily in the drug store is the most ghastly example. Difficult at best, since it skirts the edge of pure slush, it could be touching if it were played with great simplicity, the lines read as though they came from the mouths of people rather than the clip file of a TV scriptwriter; Harvey

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Evans' George, however, is straight Henry Aldrich and Elizabeth Hartman's Emily is out of the same pop-drama bag, the stock girl-next-door, colored slightly by the kind of kookiness the actress showed in *You're a Big Boy Now*. George's crying scene with his father is almost as impossible and, since Ed Begely plays Dr. Gibbs, the fault cannot be laid to youthful inexperience with a particular kind of dramatic material. Begley is as cute in his way—wise old, lovable old, crusty old Doc Gibbs—as Evans is in his. Heliotrope, French toast, choir practice—the lines are full of the simplest things. Yet, no one in the cast (except perhaps Margaret Hamilton as Mrs. Soames) reads lines as though he had ever smelled a flower, eaten breakfast, sung a note. The whole production screams *quaint, quaint, quaint,* and the life in the play depends on the fact that if there is something quaint about a strawberry phosphate the inhabitants of Grover's Corners cannot know it.

There are a number of other bad or bewildering things about the production. There is a fruitless attempt at a New Hampshire accent, but each of the performers has his own version (ranging from Maine to deep South) and none of them stays in place for three acts. I can understand that showcase casting calls for Begley and Mildred Natwick and other performers of their generation, but—since the parents of George and Emily would be in their late thirties, early forties—the impression is that in Grover's Corners a whole generation has been lost. These and other minor deficiencies might be forgiven or overlooked if the initial error—the decision to be cunning—had not corrupted the whole production.

One trying aspect of the performance is a judgment of sorts on Wilder. His rejection of over-set, over-propped plays is understandable within the historic context, but his decision to settle for a chair, a board, a ladder and leave the rest to imagination fails to provide the simplicity he aimed for. Donald Driver has apparently directed the company to keep active, and their jittery, enthusiastic response has resulted in busy-work that is completely distracting. One finds oneself watching the actors' hands and considering the appropriateness of their gestures (those women don't know how to string beans, that coffee spoon must be two feet long) as one never does in the presence of real props. Thus, the scenes, already burdened with show-business sweetness, are further decorated with imaginary fancy work.

Why bother to look so harshly at a revival of *Our Town?* It is symptomatic in two ways—one good, one bad. It is another of the many revivals we have seen the last few years in which American plays of reputation and quality have been remounted in an attempt to reach a new as well as a nostalgic audience. Such a museum operation is healthy enough, but not when the production, however happily received, is at the expense of the play. This *Our Town*—like the 1967 *The Little Foxes* and last season's *The Show-Off*—pays homage to earlier American drama by strangling the work and holding a tony funeral. According to a statement of purpose published in the program, the directors of the Plumstead Playhouse, Martha Scott (the original Emily) and Alfred de Liagre, Jr., yearning for a National Theater, believe in "continually exploring our national treasury of plays." So do I. Exploration not exploitation.

GERALD WEALES

BOOKS

The reintegration of man with nature

The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition

THEODORE ROSZAK

Doubleday, $7.95 cloth, $1.95 paper

WARREN SLOAT

There are two ways of exploring blood. One, get into your vessels and flow with it; two, put it on a slide and look at it under a microscope.

The second way has become the only kind of knowledge valued in a cultural system that prevails through much of the world. The first way informs with the kind of knowledge that many of the young, in revolt against the dominant culture, are seeking.

This difference, according to Theodore Roszak, a history teacher at California State College, Hayward, sets the two cultures apart. Out of that demarcation he has produced a pioneering and interesting work about the formation of a new constellation of values, chiefly through the medium of young middle-class whites, in the bowels of the so-called straight world.

The malady of straight culture, he argues, grows out of a form of consciousness based on scientific method that separates subject from object. He calls this "objective consciousness." "The dominant social status of expertise," he writes, "is founded on the dominant cultural status of this form of consciousness." This "psychic monopoly" has the support of capitalist and socialist masses in their societies.

Most of our ills are traced to this technocracy: undemocratic decision-making, centralized planning, bigness, the consumer merry-go-round, gadgeteering, superweapons, and even joyless-

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ness. Above all, he says, objectivity is morally crippling and alienative. One convincing illustration, a clinical description of poison gas experiments on the eyes of rabbits, should shake you up.

Once again, as in the old horror movies, the mad scientist in his unholy laboratory becomes the villain. But where are the villagers who mumble of sacred mysteries not to be traduced? The only available dissenters are the youthful adherents of the anarcho-magical counterculture who—forsaking progress in both capitalist and Marxist forms—have turned Eastward and inward, with drugs as the means of transportation.

Most of the book becomes a deft examination of the thought of leading countercultural influences—St. Timothy the Tripper, Allen Ginsberg, Alan Watts, Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, and others. Roszak's own thoughts are often obvious, sometimes wrong, and occasionally brilliant. The themes growing out of this examination lead into the best segment of the book: his chapter on Paul Goodman and utopian thought.

Here Roszak drops all pretense of writing about fashionable ideas and seizes on Goodman's little-known brand of Gestalt Therapy to pull together Roszak's concept of the core of the new culture—the reintegration of man with nature. The book soars off at its close in a rhapsody on this theme, an invocation for contact with the spirit of the earth to restore community, sacrament, and visionary experience.

This is an absorbing essay, and the author is certainly on the right track, despite some rhetorical exaggerations about science. But whatever happened to (1) Rock? (2) Sex? Straight society, its hand in its pants, sniggering over its monstrous sexual hang-ups, is the comic cultural event of our time. (3) the second cousin to this erotic anti-sexuality—racism?

Since Roszak prefers to discuss body-ecstasy through the work of Norman Brown rather than James Brown, it's unsurprising that the only people in sight who have concentrated their energy and joy into dance, who move with the grace that expresses their determination to be free, have been largely excluded. This omission of "the militant black young, whose political project has become . . . culturally old-fashioned" illuminates why these reflections lack muscle.

The author has neatly counterposed his cultures into opposing camps. He should have thrust them against each other, for their effects take place at their intersection.

Recently black people worked through an attempt—labelled "civil rights"—to appeal to the moral fiber of the Silent Majority. Despite considerable jive about "separatism," what followed grew from their flash that the attempt was irrelevant. White youth—in "the peace movement"—have been experiencing a similar process and are veering in the same direction, toward their own thing. As James Baldwin once said, why integrate into a burning house?

Roszak notes, then quickly drops, the thought that white youth sense a connection between their thing and the soul thing (color, culture and consciousness, Ron Karenga calls it). But his own book begins with an exhortation from William Blake: "Rouse up, O Young Men of the New Age! Set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings!" Cultures, it would appear, tend to involve barricades. Though our age bristles with visions of apocalypse, the struggle, as Blake suggests, plunges deeper than a lot of street fighting. In this context, Roszak's observations about "the end of politics" appear unreal.

So the connection is there. Black people are liberating themselves in a struggle. They regard that struggle as a moral one. Since they blame men instead of systems, they are culturally old-fashioned. The struggle starts in their heads, against the enemy within, 350 years within, the dominant culture inside them.

At the barricades the merely faddish drops away to uncover meaning. Roszak's view that the Silent Majority are "cheerful robots" beset by "pathological passivity" misses the mark. Under the seeming passivity lies seething immobility. This paralysis has been programmed from birth, through the schools and into corporate life: fear disguises itself as apathy. Aggressions blocked by anxiety break out, but with programmed targets. The straight society takes it like a lady—from the war machine, cost-plus, graft, organized crime, shoddy workmanship, and the poisoning of the air and water—but howls for the scalps of welfare chiselers. Passive about a genocidal war, it rages over long hair.

This disease—which I call spirosis of the agnew—is complex, with many symptoms, including plasticity, pelvic fossilization, and something akin to "objective consciousness." But that is a symptom, not the disease. It is also a technique for coping with fear, providing the device the straight society treasures above all else: a way of copping out.

The counterculture, emerging from this milieu as its antagonist, must offer more than fresh air, sunshine and communication with daffodils, though God knows we need them. And despite Roszak's silence, it does offer more. The cleansing of the senses and personal liberation come when fear is slain. The cop who has to be killed is in your head, and he *is* a fascist pig.

"The revolution which will free us from alienation," Roszak eventually writes, "must be primarily therapeutic in nature and not merely institutional." But he should have begun there. After the demons are cast out, there must be made a place for sacrament and community to bloom. The struggle moves out of the head and body. In political terms it is called desanctification. That authority branded as illegitimate will not be defused effortlessly. So a struggle begins. It has begun, but it is not in this book.

At the last, Roszak's book is finally merely interesting. "Revolution," writes Philip Berrigan, "is a time of personal and public purification . . . and the liberation principally sought after is liberation from fear." That makes the point.

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Choosing a Sex Ethics

EUGENE B. BOROWITZ

Schocken, $5

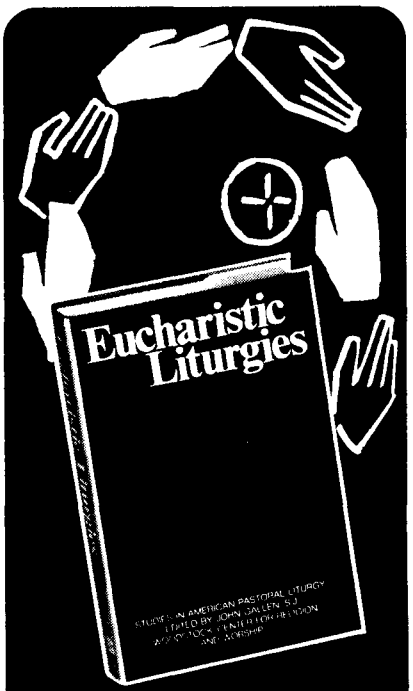
JOHN GILES MILHAVEN

As the ethical thinking of the Christian community moves steadily out into open waters, the prudent Christian does not ignore course-plotting of Jewish believers, also subject to the currents of our times. Within the last year, two New York rabbis have published studies of the Jewish moral tradition, bringing out its potentialities for continued evolution today. The claim for contemporary pertinence was implicit in the research of Rabbi David Feldman into the precepts of the Talmud, codes, commentaries, and especially the rabbinic Responsa, as they dealt with procreation, marriage independent of procreation, sexual pleasure in marriage, contraception, abortion and sexual abstinence. (*Birth Control in Jewish Law*. New York University, 1968.) In his "Jewish inquiry" published this fall, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz focuses on what he considers the central issue in sexual ethics today, sexual intercourse without marriage, especially as faced by the unmarried. His reflections proceed along lines of contemporary thinking, preeminently those of Martin Buber. But he also brings to bear "the Jewish experience," devoting to it a chapter and 32 pages of footnotes and invoking it throughout the book.

Endeavoring to say something to the contemporary situation, Rabbi Borowitz has, I believe, handicapped himself by gearing his investigation to a question otiose for most of his readers. In this selection of the Hillel Library series, he is addressing himself mainly to university students. Assuredly, many students search for moral insight concerning premarital intercourse, but not all of them pose the question, as the Rabbi does, in terms of *universal* wrongness or permissibility. Those who do are, I submit, implicitly dialoguing with authority and will be satisfied only by authority's declaration of their obligation or freedom. They will not last long reading the Rabbi's attempt to clarify the fundamental moral issues concerning intercourse since it becomes clear, from the beginning, that he denies anyone, including himself, "the right to tell someone else what is right," and is merely encouraging the reader "to make up his own mind in as informed, thoughtful and sensitive a way as he can."

Nevertheless, Rabbi Borowitz has much to say to his readers, student or not, Jewish or not, whether or not they shape the question as he does into a universal "Should she? Shouldn't she?" (In at least three places, the Rabbi's choice of personal pronouns seems to indicate that he is envisaging the question primarily from the point of view of the girl. While safely within a parenthesis, free to be picayune, let me note that the picture on the dust jacket is similarly disconcerting. Only the girl's face is visible; she is giving her attention, not to the man she is unenthusiastically embracing, but to a spectator at a 90° angle off to her left.) Few will not gain understanding from his careful confronting in their most persuasive form four alternative standards of sexual behavior: healthy orgasm, mutual consent, love and marriage. The Rabbi's final presentation of his own views should also be helpful to most readers, whether or not they agree that healthy orgasm and mutual consent do not suffice to justify intercourse, that true love does, but only marriage fulfills the ideal.

The Jewish tradition sets thinking one whose home is the Christian ethical tradition. Jewish "legalism," as Rabbi Borowitz presents it, is different from the legalism latter-day Christians are trying to purge from their morality. Neither the Torah, the rest of the Bible, the Mishnah nor the Talmud contains a law universally prohibiting premarital intercourse. The reason is that the social life of the times did not call for it. On the one hand, the general moral condemnation by the Jewish community persisted unquestioned. On the other hand, specific forms of premarital intercourse were best handled by law on an individual basis, i.e. only to the extent they posed a public problem in the context of the belief and practice of the community. Unlike adultery, premarital



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intercourse by unengaged adults was not a common problem, because betrothal by the early teens was apparently the custom in rabbinic times and continued well into medieval times. The betrothed girl was prohibited, with the full force of the Torah's ban against adultery, sexual relations with any other man except her husband-to-be. With him, the act was regarded as immoral, but not specifically prohibited by law. Concubinage (premarital for at least one of the partners) was, from earlier biblical times through the middle ages, permitted by Jewish law, endorsing the conduct of great biblical figures such as Abraham, David and Solomon, and the practice of Spanish Jews copying the style of their Moslem and Christian patrons. The Christian cannot but ask how a moral tradition that permitted concubinage, divorce, abortion and contraception, fostered at the same time in practice the notoriously high moral level of Jewish married and family life.

During the twelfth century, in the great legal code of Maimonides, there suddenly appears a flat, full-scale prohibition against premarital intercourse, including that of the concubine. In the course of the centuries, Maimonides' position became the standard for Jewish law: legally and morally, marriage was the only situation in which sexual intercourse should occur. The personal views of Rabbi Borowitz reflect the final position of the law. But he invokes that nature of the law to claim freedom in determining his total moral stance. Time brings social circumstances in which traditional practices can no longer operate effectively and brings new moral insights to the community. Unlike a philosophy tracing out immutable principles, a legal tradition can, and the Jewish does, change and adapt the law to the new circumstances. As a rabbinical student put it recently to this reviewer, "The Jewish authorities must continually create law just as the Supreme Court does."

Both Rabbi Borowitz and Rabbi Feldman document a positive attitude of the Jewish tradition towards sexuality considered in itself, distinct from procreation. Perhaps because of the public they have in view, the documentation does not seem sufficient for historical proof that the Jews as a whole avoided the general hellenistic and medieval mistrust of sexual pleasure. But certain texts reflect a healthiness difficult to imagine in Christians of the time. A prayer to be recited adjacent to one's bed contains, "O Lord my God and God of my fathers . . . may it be your will . . . that there is . . . no weakening of power to prevent me from fulfilling my desire with my wife. Rather, now and forever, let my passion be ready for me without fail or slackness of organ, at any time that I should desire. Amen Selah." When the Rabbis disagree on the criteria of a girl's maturity (and therefore emancipation from her father), Rabbi Ben Azzai declaring, "When the ring around the nipples darkens," Rabbi Jose, "When the breasts are so developed that, should a hand be placed on the tip of a nipple, it sinks and only slowly rises again," one smiles as over medieval disputes about angels on a pin. But there is a difference.

The Witches

FRANCOISE MALLET-JORIS

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $6.95

BRIGID ELSON

Françoise Mallet-Joris has written a work the style and form of which are in their own way as perverse as her subject matter, seventeenth century sorcery. In an author's note which, in the spirit of Halloween, she has thoughtfully placed at the back of the book although it is a useful introduction, she informs us, "Not intending to write a historical work, I have not hesitated to bring together or distort certain facts. My aim has been to reconstitute as faithfully as possible the spirit of the time." Ah, you say to yourself, it's going to be classy historical fiction. Dumas *fils* is long dead and a few ideas have been thought of since then; the relentlessly prolific Mallet-Joris is a woman of her times.

And so indeed she is, in a way. Mme. Mallet-Joris lives in the land of the *nouveau roman*, and she has dispensed *à la* Sarraute with all but the most minimal kind of narrative. But the paucity of exterior events is instead an opportunity for the author to practice, with a few modern variations, a kind of writing which has a long history in France, viz. the *maxime*, deft brief psychological analysis developed to a fine point more than two centuries ago by Vauvenargues and La Rochefoucauld. Thus we find the author treating us to such insights as: "He who despises himself always finds it hard for his own self-contempt to be confirmed by the contempt of others." and ". . . . injustice was not that, innocent, one was condemned; injustice was that one was forced to become guilty."

The Witches then is not so much fiction as character analysis, a series of meditations on the sufferings of three women victimized in their time by a combination of medical ignorance and a tyrannical ideology which justified as God-given the evils of a terrible social system sustained by men. Mme. Mallet-Joris sees two of these women as sociological debris, forced into sorcery in an effort to escape from the kind of outcast's misery which perhaps only the hobo and the Harlem junkie experience in our society. (In fact, witchcraft was, among other things, a way of turning on and tuning out in the seventeenth century. You might say history has only seen the cauldron turn into pot, in our own day; or, as Marx might not put it, whereas religion was once a form of escapism, now opiate has become the religion of the people.) The third heroine is of bourgeois origins; the source of her demonism is presented via what might be termed an aesthetic rather than a clinical psychology as intense sexual repression which eventually annihilates its erotic object, the woman's lover. He, rather than she, is burned at the stake as a sorcerer.

So we find the author compassionately using modern scientific ideas and time-honored stylistic devices to absolve her heroines of what certain circles of French society, even in our century, might have considered 'sins'. A question remains: why? The vast majority of her readers may well wonder why this book

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was written, despite the grace of style and penetrating comments (particularly on childhood. Mme. Mallet-Joris, who is the mother of three children, offers us some beautiful, if at times ponderous, insights into this state of being). Apart from Norman Mailer, the number of literate people in this world who need to be told that the devil is a symbolic name for psychological disorientation is rapidly diminishing, if indeed they do not all now reside in Baton Rouge and isolated caves in the Pyrenees. (I do not deny having been assured of the existence of the devil by a priest ten years ago when I was in college, but he after all was Irish, even if he did have a Ph.D.) Perhaps what motivated Mme. Mallet-Joris was a desire to jump on the scholarly witchcraft bandwagon which has gathered momentum in the past few years: one thinks of Trevor-Roper's articles in last year's *Encounters* and a recent book by the French historian Mandrou. A brief comparison of *The Witches* with the latter, which mentions details of one of the cases treated by Mme. Mallet-Joris, shows that she has severely edited the historical facts in order to present a "true" historical impression. Thus neither mature scholars nor the non-intellectual general public will be entirely satisfied by her work. No, *The Witches* seems destined to be cherished by intemperate undergraduate grinds who devour all the secondary sources on Renaissance History reading lists. The book is a curio, the literary equivalent of, say, an intricately carved broomstick.

Dominated Man

ALBERT MEMMI

Orion, $5

ALICE MAYHEW

Albert Memmi has made it his life's work to understand what oppression is and does, and in so doing has moved from the bite of personal experience to the metaphysics not only of what unites the oppressed, and their tyrants, but what is the human soil that feeds the roots of oppression itself. In this book Memmi, after having written three detailed studies of the persecuted as well as two novels wrenched from his personal history (as colonial Tunisian under French rule, and as Jew), draws together a number of *types* of the oppressed and reasons inductively to the tendency toward violent aggression as a root human situation—thus as more profound a matter than simple material advantage, though the economics of oppression is fundamental to it.

The oppressor accuses, mocks, belittles and tries guiltily and stealthily to reduce the victim to nothingness. The oppressed is mutilated both objectively and subjectively, is accessory in his own wreckage, envies, stealthily admires and imitates his oppressor, hates and rejects himself. He dreams dreams of redress and at least of the liberating act if not (because he is crippled by the fact that he is made in the Other's image) the state of *being* free. Thus, oppression is identical with neurosis and violence, not only because it begs desperately for the taking up of arms, but because of what it is in itself—a disintegrative course for both the intimately joined oppressed and oppressor.

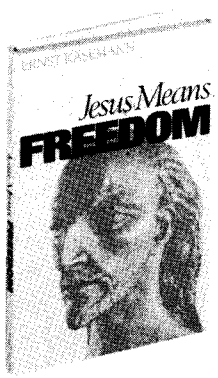
In these occasional pieces—introductions to books, articles, reviews, speeches—Memmi talks about the prototypical classes of dominated man: the victims of colonialism, of Christendom, of the owning classes, of whites, nationalism, male society, and domestic masters. Jews, blacks, exploited laborers, women, migrant workers, servants: this is the roll call of those who, in category, and who however different their physical or material situation or their vulnerability, are *per se* prey to spiritual ruin.

Sources and degrees of oppression vary. In fact, Memmi speaks of "total" oppression in certain instances—the American black, the French proletariat worker, the colonized peoples, among others. It is a confusing use of the word, at first, since *total* oppression may be a concept hard to grasp as applying to a whole type or class outside of actual slavery or genocide. And, perhaps because this is a collection, the word is used with some inconsistency. Since any attempt to know what oppression feels like from the outside is doomed to failure, we must both reason logically from what we *can* know, and hear the words of the oppressed as well. But who can speak for the oppressed? Memmi persuades us that it can not be the oppressed in the state of oppression but like himself, those perhaps, who have emerged from oppression, who can at least hope to unite for us the two worlds. For the states of oppression and non-oppression are two different worlds. The particular external act or acts of this or that oppression may not be absolute, but domination, even though relative, has absolute results. It affects the human person in all aspects of his existence, making him a non-

Ernst Käsemann

Jesus Means

FREEDOM



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person in his own eyes, as well as the Other's.

"Oppression is like an octopus," Memmi writes, "it is hard to tell which of its arms has the tightest stranglehold. Injustice, insults, humiliation and insecurity can be as hard to bear as hunger." The result must be an unbearable tension and finally an alienation that transcends classes, peoples and nations, rises even perhaps above the dominating and the dominated to become the life condition.

Memmi has already spoken at length from a personal point of view as a member of two oppressed classes. Toward the French colonizers, "I too felt this admiration in spite of myself." As a North African Jew, he identified typically with both the Moslem and the French, and as an historical Jew, he needs, he has written eloquently, to be free to enjoy his Jewishness (*judéité*), as the black must be free to love his negritude. This self-awareness, only possible when equality is not premised solely on lack of difference, is a flag for the reconquest of self which was lost through oppression—through accusation, illusion, self-rejection and myth. One is a person only in all his individuality. One desires not to be preserved from disquietude and anxiety by being cast in someone else's image—white, gentile, male, owner—but by savoring one's own genius, therefore all of oneself.

Racism, however, is revealed incessantly as the symbol and sum of oppression. It participates in all it projects more or less directly by providing the means by which one reduces whole groups to instant inferiority without having to go shopping for more than one's assumptions. And having issued these assumptions by fiat and having canonized them, thereby removing the whole matter from further discussion, one has arrived at a state of perfect convenience. It is clear why racism, and its logical derivatives, is so widespread, for to boot, it requires scant sophistication; it is a pleasure within everyone's reach. The fight against racism must therefore coincide greatly with the fight against oppression. Memmi rejects the tendency of Marxist and bourgeois alike to reduce everything to economics but presents us with a complex paradox: only the oppressed can free themselves, though at the same time they can not escape oppression by their own unaided efforts since *"in a collective state of oppression one can only achieve the false freedom of abstraction."* (Italics mine.) Thus, in each of the Western vis-à-vis he has chosen, Memmi premises change on the exclusive possibility that the whole of society shall be reformed—capitalism, nationalism, religious relationships, international relationships—and that there be, as well, "new relations in the domain of love and of maternity."

The last point is made in a review of Simone de Beauvoir's several autobiographical fictive and non-fictive works where Memmi questions and distinguishes going beyond de Beauvoir or even the question of woman—between, on the one hand, emancipation or liberation (wars and acts), and freedom and liberty (process and transcendance). If it is for her femininity that woman is oppressed, as the black for his skin, the Jew for his identity, then woman too is "totally oppressed," in the term as Memmi-uses it: oppressed *in all her acts*. The Jew, the black, the native have each a history, as does woman, as well as a specificity, *free* woman don't exist outside of free *woman*, and it is not a question of freedom from child-bearing to gain emancipation, as it is a matter of liberation within the context of motherhood, or lover. His whole world to each.

It seems to me the tuning rod of Memmi's thought that though he insists that exploitation is imposed from without, that radical change can come only in concourse, that the act of liberating

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REVIEWERS

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oneself entails violence (just as the non-act of non-liberation or subjection is violent, self-mutilating), that the end is the exaltation of the person and a universe of free persons.

The content of freedom is nothing less than the sum of all the elements sufficient to transform oneself into a free man. It is, obviously, not merely a question of state of life, standard of living, position, power, or freedom *from*. One does not, or at great risk, spill one's specialness (content) down the drain to make the ranks of a grey and tentatively acceptable abstraction. Indeed, here in Memmi's thought is a paean for the fullness of the earth, and he is too honest and too imaginative to dismiss the content of various experiences.

Memmi makes this point very persuasively when he touches in several instances on the relation between Jews and Christians. Theological reconciliation, he correctly points out, is impossible between them as long as the figure of Christ remains what it is for Christians and what it is for Jews. We say, therefore, yes, and proceed with our dialogue on common social, ethical, humanist and loving grounds. The Christian sees God in Jewish providence and men, with God, move the world (including the churches) into the Kingdom.

IN BRIEF

Brain, Mind and Computers. By Stanley L. Jaki. Herder and Herder, $7.50. *The Paradox of Oblers' Paradox.* By Stanley L. Jaki. Herder and Herder, $9.50.

Professor Jaki of Seton Hall is an Hungarian-born physicist and historian of science. Challenging the "thinking-machine" theorists in *Brain, Mind,* Jaki offers a researched and readable argument for mind-body dualism. Instead of computer utopianism, Jaki envisions a continuance of mankind's historic good and evil dialectic.

An infinite universe with an infinite number of stars should light up infinitely. Then how come the night sky is so dark? That's what *Oblers' Paradox* is all about. An amateur German astronomer named Wilhelm Oblers first publicized the paradox in 1823 although the problem goes back to the ancients. Writing here as an historian rather than philosopher of science, Jaki presents a fascinating account of this neglected controversy from Democritus to twentieth-century opinions. Neither book is for the uninitiated.

A Degree of Difference. By George Barry Ford. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $5.95.

Memoirs by a courageous New York priest who has been in the liberal forefront during his entire priestly life, often to the distress of the ecclesiastical Establishment. The book is unfortunately not as good as the author deserves, but it will interest many nonetheless.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 419)

is neither interested in "delayed justice" nor "can afford to sit back and wait." The University made its offer of arbitration on March 7, 1967. It was not formally and legally accepted by the faculty members until over a year later. It is a matter of public record that subsequent to that time their lawyer was devoting his time for many months to the New York City teachers' strike. The University has made every conceivable effort to expedite the proceedings. When the cases are concluded, the record will clearly and conclusively demonstrate where the responsibility lies for any delay.

An interesting comparison can be made—even to wording—between Mr. Scimecca's article and an article in *American Teacher,* December/1969: "St. John's—Four Years Later." Can *Commonweal* have lent itself to propaganda? It has certainly lent itself to the publication of falsehoods and to calumny.

(REV.) JOSEPH I. DIRVIN, C.M.
Assistant to the President,
St. John's University

Reply

I, obviously, take exception to Father Dirvin's allegation of falsity.

First of all, his first three points concern Robert Wagner and can be combined. The fact of the matter is that Dr. Israel Kugler, President of the UFCT, met with former Mayor Wagner, in the latter's office. At that time Wagner assured him that he had become a trustee of the University under the mistaken assumption that the dispute had been settled. He then offered to mediate the dispute. It seems inconceivable that Dr. Kugler would lie publicly about Mayor Wagner's role. What would he have to gain by such a statement when it could

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so easily be denied by Wagner, if it were false?

Points four and five can also be combined. I do have an "idea of what the UFCT intends to do with its $100,000 fund-raising drive." It will cost at least $85,000 for lawyers' fees alone. As for St. John's University's "enormous burden of expense"—yes, it can afford to sit back and wait for the public to forget. It is public record that the University was showing a profit of two million dollars a year for a number of years preceding the strike. Perhaps they feel that what they are spending might be worth it if they could salvage their name, which is now mud, in the academic community.

Father Dirvin also, at the end of his letter, engages in an *ad hominem* argument, something which comes as no surprise to one who was an original striker. He claims that "an interesting comparison can be made—even to wording," between my article and one published in the *American Teacher*. After reading Father Dirvin's letter, I obtained a copy of the article in question. Outside of the similarity of title (something which could be expected considering both were written about the anniversary of the strike), the only similarity that can be found concerns the five preconditions for arbitration, something which the UFCT has made a public document. Perhaps Father Dirvin considers everything that calls St. John's on the carpet, "similar."

In conclusion, I am weary, and I would hope that the academic community is also, of St. John's continued self-righteous position. If they are as innocent and as maligned as they claim, then why their repeated emphasis on secrecy? Could it be that they have something to hide?

JOSEPH A. SCIMECCA

Defending the Cardinal

Newport, R. I.

To the Editors: The implications of your recent editorial "Out to Lunch" [10/17/69] seem to be that Cardinal Cooke is more interested in being photographed (read associating) with the wealthy and powerful than he is with "the little people." Perhaps Cardinal Cooke does not call up the news media every time he performs an act of love and compassion for "the little people." In the two instances you cite (a) refusal to see Mr. James Forman and (b) refusal to see Fr. Mayer and "a group of sympathetic Catholics" it is quite evident that the news media were notified in advance as to their intentions and timing, showing their desire to publicize themselves as much as to talk with the Cardinal. It seems to me that your examples are rather flimsy grounds on which to base such unfair criticisms of the Cardinal.

"To consult democratically" does not mean that he should satisfy every publicity-seeking individual or group. This is especially true if the individual does not represent those over whom he claims leadership. James Forman's program has been rejected by the one man who has done more for blacks through NAACP than any member of his race

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—Mr. Roy Wilkins. I cannot see why the Cardinal is less interested in "the little people" (read black), if indeed, he refused to lend himself to the publicity-seeking program of Mr. James Forman. Nor do I see why he should lend himself, in like manner, to the publicizing of Fr. Mayer and his followers, who in my judgement do not constitute "a group of sympathetic Catholics."

I cannot believe that the Cardinal is less interested in "the little people" when among the first acts of his administration he threw open the grounds, the gymnasium and the swimming pool of St. Joseph's Seminary to the black and Puerto Rican and other children of the inner city parishes for summer vacations. In my experience as Pastor I have never known him to turn down anyone reasonably seeking his counsel. And much of his time is spent with, for, and in solving the problems of "the little people."

Commonweal has more important things to do than to make petty attacks on the goodness and compassion of Cardinal Cooke.

(MSGR.) JOHN D. MCGOWAN
Pastor Emeritus,
Church of the Resurrection, Rye, N.Y.

Trimming the Pentagon

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: In "How to Cut The Military Budget by $54 Billion" [Nov. 28], Seymour Melman conveniently neglected to mention the respective Chairmen of the Armed Services committees in the Senate and the House, John Stennis of Mississippi, and Mendel Rivers of Georgia, both of whom want to *raise* the military budget by $54 Billion.

After the past summer, peace lobbyists working to cut the military budget felt some progress being made with Senate amendments to the military authorization bill only to see them either ignored in the House or knocked out in the conference with the above noted chairmen. These Chairmen often get others to see their way, like Congressman Manny Celler of Brooklyn who supported the ABM authorization in a non-recorded teller vote.

Until more peace-oriented citizens make it their business to know what is going on, the arrogant spending by the military will increase with or without the Vietnam war. Only support for groups like the World Federalists, USA, the Council for a Livable World, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the ADA, SANE and others working daily in Washington against the military spending can put us on the road toward a re-structuring of our national priorities and away from a warfare state.

W. F. CLAIRE
Executive Director,
World Federalists, USA

THE TALK

(Continued from page 422)

ing." Finchter nodded vigorously as he spoke, then stopped and grinned boyishly. "While we were talking," he said, "I've been listening to the newscast on the radio in the other room. The Mets won."

Had we noticed his nodding, Mr. Finchter asked. We had, and we wondered whether that, too, was connected with Speed Listening. It was. "Actually, that is a rotary movement made with the ears and the head. I've yet to devise a suitable term for it. Anyway, the idea is to extend the ears so as to capture incoming sounds, then tilt the head, letting the sounds slip down to the brain receptors. It adds up to quite a few more words per minute over the long run, although it's not a major part of our technique."

The third major pillar of Speed Listening, we were told, is *Audio-scan* —listening only to the middle of words. "About eighty percent of the meaning of English words," Mr. Finchter said, "is to be found in their middles. By employing Audio-scan, the Institute's students can run their ears right down the middle of a conversation and get almost as much out of it as they would in any case. The intervening listening gaps—during the beginnings and ends of words—can be used to listen to something else. Or just for relaxation," added Finchter with another boyish grin.

Before ushering us out a side door, Mr. Finchter showed us a few items of the Institute's equipment: a "bleeper" for bleeping out the beginnings and ends of words, a black ear-patch lined with sponge. "An ordinary ear plug would do as well," he admitted. "But this looks rather rakish, don't you think? I tell the students that they are on their way to becoming the Moshe Dayans of the listening world. It's good for school spirit." So far the American Institute of Speed Listening has only fifty students in the four-month course, which costs six hundred dollars. "But you'll be hearing a lot more from us—and quickly," Mr. Finchter called out gaily as we clambered down the fire escape and out into Sixth Avenue. PETER STEINFELS

"WHAT EMERGES from Songmy—just as in the liberal Left's response to the murders by Oswald, Sirhan and Ray—is an uncontrollable impulse not to blame the particular criminal, but rather to vilify America generally. The assassinations permitted the expression of a deep animosity against America, gave such feeling a seeming legitimacy. As an opportunity to indulge in this dark process, Songmy was seized upon almost gleefully."

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